



FILE: PA01-0065

DATE: November 1, 2001

TO: File/Record/Applicant

FROM: Thomas B. Mathews, Director, Planning and Development Services Department

SUBJECT: Planning Application PA01-0065 for Site Development Permit

APPLICANT: TeleCom Wireless Solutions, agent for Sprint PCS and Mr. Roger Delong, Property Owner.

I. NATURE OF PROJECT:

The applicant is proposing to install an unstaffed wireless telecommunications facility for use in the Sprint's PCS network service area along the Ortega Highway within the San Juan Capistrano/Lake Elsinor area. The proposal consists of a 45 foot high cellular antenna concealed as a pine tree, commonly referred to as a stealth "Monopine" antenna. This installation will occupy a 1000 square foot area (25' by 40') and it will include seven (7) cabinets for the necessary supporting equipment, all enclosed within a fenced area.

The property is zoned for agricultural uses (A1), which allows communication transmitting, reception or relay facilities as principal uses, subject to the approval of a use permit. In addition, the Orange County Zoning Code (Section 7-9-129.2) allows antennas to exceed the district building height of 35 feet by 10 additional feet. The proposed antenna meets this regulation precisely, excluding any pine tree branches needed to conceal the antenna itself.

The proposed site is in a remote location of the County within the Cleveland National Forest. The site is located in a rural setting very near the Orange County's southeast border with the County of Riverside. The property is 26 acres, mostly undeveloped, with the exception of a single family residence occupied by the property owner, Mr. Roger Delong. The antenna is located very near the edge of the property against a hillside, between a garage and the slope. The antenna is unlikely to impact adjacent properties, which are also zoned A1 and mostly undeveloped, as the antenna itself will be tucked into this hillside. Should the antenna be visible from surrounding properties, the monopole will be masked by its pine tree appearance.

The proposed site has an Open Space land use designation in the Land Use Element of the General Plan. The antenna project is consistent with this designation, which provides for opportunities for low-intensity, high technology facilities which do not require a commitment of significant infrastructure. Wireless telecommunications facilities are based on technical requirements, which include service area, geographical elevations, alignment with neighboring sites and customer demand

components. The proposed site's characteristics meet all these requirements, thus enabling effective provision telecommunications service in the area.

However, the Ortega Highway is a designated Viewscape Corridor in the Master Plan of Arterial Highways and therefore, the appearance of the proposed antenna is critical in preserving the natural rural qualities of the corridor. The antenna as proposed addresses these aesthetic concerns as it is designed to mimic a mature pine tree. In addition, the proposed monopine will have two live pine trees planted in close proximity to create the impression of a natural grove of trees commonly found in the region.

The project was routed to various County Departments and Sections for review and comment. In addition, the application was also forwarded to the Orange County Sheriff's Department, the County of Riverside, and the Cleveland National Forest Service of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

II. REFERENCE:

Telecommunications facilities are a permitted use in the A1 zoning district subject to the approval of a Site Development Permit pursuant to the Orange County Zoning Code sections 7-9-55 A1 "General Agricultural" and 7-9-150 "Discretionary Permits and Procedures"

III. ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION:

Negative Declaration No. PA 01-0065 was prepared for this project and was posted for public review from 9/20/01 to 10/9/01. Prior to project approval, the Zoning Administrator must find this Negative Declaration adequate to satisfy the requirements of CEQA. Appendix A contains the required CEQA Findings.

IV. CERTIFICATION:

I hereby certify that the subject proposal has been Conditionally Approved as noted below.

Thomas B. Mathews, Director
Planning and Development Services Department

By: _____

Chad Brown, Chief
CPSD/Site Planning Section

MBC

/Staff report/PA01-0065 Sprint

ATTACHMENTS:

Appendix A – Findings

Appendix B - Conditions of Approval

EXHIBITS:

Exhibit 1 Location Map

Exhibit 2 CEQA Documentation

Exhibit 3 Visual Simulations of proposed installation

Exhibit 4 Equipment Area Site Plan and Elevations

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Any interested person may appeal the decision of the Director on this permit to the Orange County Planning Commission within 15 calendar days of the decision upon submittal of required documents and a filing fee of \$760.00 filed at the Development Processing Center, 300 N. Flower St., Santa Ana.